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From the desk of
José Ramos-Horta
Journalist • Author • Diplomat

Camaradas e amigos,

Over the years you gave an enormous contribution to mobilizing international support for East Timor. I am fully aware that we in FRETILIN have not been capable of corresponding to your solidarity with us. We have failed in many ways in providing you with information, ideas and orientation. In some instances, there has been a complete breach of faith by the action of some among us.

This has to change. I begin to acknowledge my limitations and weaknesses. In so doing, I cannot but state that your continuing support is ever more important and indispensable at this crucial time in our struggle.

As the CNRM's Special Representative I wish to improve our communications through a more regular contact for exchange of information and ideas; there has to be a closer consultation and cooperation; there has to be a transparent relationship among friends; the relationship cannot be one of adversaries competing for different goals, but one of friends bound by the same ideals and goals. On my part, this has been always my belief and attitude and hence have tried over the ideas to maintain with each and all of you a friendly and serious relationship.

Through the Comissao de Defesa dos Diretios do Povo Maubere (CDPM) in Lisbon I asked that the annual East Timor Solidarity Meeting be moved forward to November or December 1991 instead of January 1992. I believe we should discuss a wide range of issues and actually plan a series of activities for 1992 well in advance. Hence my proposal. If this is at all possible, I would be happy to participate in the meeting.

My appointment as CNRM's Special Representative

I am writing to you today to touch on a number of issues and also to inform you that in July 1991, I was appointed **Special Representative** of the National Council of Maubere Resistance (CNRM). The appointment was made by Xanana Gusmao with the full endorsement of the **FRETILIN's Directive Commission (Comissao Directiva da FRETILIN - CDF)** in East Timor.

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For your benefit, I am sending you a copy of the **Letter of Accreditation** in its original Portuguese form. My responsibility is restricted to the diplomatic area and, in no way, puts me above or below the FRETILIN external group.

I remain also in FRETILIN and, in fact, the FRETILIN leadership in East Timor has reinstated me as a full **Member of the Central Committee.**

You might recall, I resigned from the leadership almost two years ago over some fundamental issues. These differences have been resolved. In May 1990, the **II Extraordinary Meeting of the CNRM** in East Timor decided to:

1. Issue a statement of confidence in me;

2. Endorse all my proposals for the reestructuring of FRETILIN overseas. *

In view of this decision and consistent with my stand I rejoined the FRETILIN delegation and have been since working with my colleagues to push ahead with this much needed reorganization which I hope will bring in a new generation of cadres and leaders.

My appointment as the Special Representative of CNRM comes at a special time in our struggle. The momentous changes in the world have brought about new possibilities for increasing international interest and support for our struggle. However, this new international situation will not, in itself, bring about a solution to the problem of East Timor if we, the East Timorese, do not have a clear vision and are not capable of formulating a strategy to exploit it to our advantage.

Both FRETILIN and UDT need to change and to reorganize to better respond to the challenges and demands. However, these changes, if they do come, are coming slowly. Yet the demands on us are immediate and cannot wait. Hence, Xanana Gusmao decided to appoint someone to represent the CNRM as its spokesperson, to explore ideas and take initiatives, in the general framework of the global strategy defined by the CNRM, with a view to advancing, step by step, towards the ultimate goal of self-determination and independence.

Negotiations without pre-conditions

I wish to emphasise to you all that the peace proposal based on the concept of round-table **negotiations without pre-conditions, under U.N. auspices, is the current official CNRM's position which invalidates all previous proposals.**

This official stand was first articulated by Xanana Gusmao in his interview with Australian lawyer and journalist, Robert Domm, in September 1990, and has since been reiterated several times. Needless to say, the FRETILIN

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* Note:These and other documents are available upon request.

leadership in East Timor has also endorsed this peace proposal.

All our diplomatic initiatives have to revolve around "selling" this "product", the only one that I believe has the potential of winning international support and isolate Indonesia if it does not respond positively.

I have discussed with some of you the whole strategy of negotiations without pre-conditions and I believe there is a general understanding of what it means. For those who have some doubts, let me state the following:

a. As a general rule in the negotiation strategy, one should always try to negotiate from a position of strength.

b. However, time and again, those in a position to negotiate from a position of strength prefer not to negotiate at all because they believe they can impose instead an unconditional surrender on the adversary. And often they miscalculate the adversary's potential to recover and end up losing everything.

c. Military victory by one side or the other in East Timor is not feasible. However, the costs have been and will continue to be much greater for the East Timorese than for the Indonesians unless there is a substantial improvement in the military arsenal of the Resistance.

d. Each side in a conflict constantly evaluates its weaknesses and strengths, real and potential, current and future, to enable themselves to adopt new strategies.

e. Our weakness is mentioned above - lack of military means to alter the current situation which is in Indonesia's favour. This might change. Our strength resides in our organizational ability and popular support. Indonesia's weakness is its lack of support among the East Timorese. This will not change for it will never be able to "pacify" the East Timorese spirit and win our "hearts and minds". The actual human and material costs for East Timor is monstruous. The costs for Indonesia are not significant enough that would affect the whole society and cause unrest. Diplomatic costs for Indonesia are more significant but not too difficult to manage.

f. We have two options: alter the military stalemate by increasing the destructive capacity of our forces with a view, if not to achieving a military victory (like the Eritreans), then at least to inflicting convincing damage on the adversary as in incentive for it to seek negotiations. If this is not possible, then the only alternative avalailable is for us is to work towards increasing the diplomatic costs for Indonesia which might be as convincing as the military costs. Of course, the first option if at all attainable would not necessarily exclude the last. Quite the contrary, both would work in perfect tandem.

g. The negotiations without pre-conditions strategy aims at increasing diplomatic support for the Resistance and the costs for Indonesia. In the long run, if we know how to

exploit the current international situation to our advantage, coupled with inevitable changes in Indonesia, we might have achieved the first goal and this is to bring Indonesia to the table of negotiations.

h. You might ask, what are then the advantages for the Resistance? My answer: Indonesia is the one that will be making a significant concession by negotiating with the East Timorese. We have nothing to lose, only a lot to gain with this strategy.

i. Aren't we gambling too much? Wouldn't we be outclassed in a complex negotiation process? My answer: If and when Indonesia finally agrees to come to the round-table conference it will be because in the decision-making circles in Jakarta a consensus had been reached that this would be Indonesia's best way out of East Timor, the face saving formula that would allow Indonesia to leave East Timor with some semblance of dignity. Indonesia would not come to the negotiations until such a time when the costs of its continuing presence in Indonesia, measured both in political and military as well diplomatic terms, are too high. On the other hand, in the final analysis, the conference itself will not have the mandate to negotiate a permanent solution, but rather it would seek a set of provisional agreements that would have to be ratified by the people through a referendum.

Peace Talks Campaign

Pat Walsh, Director of the ACFOA human rights office in Melbourne, designed a campaign to promote Xanana's peace proposal. Except for Portugal and other countries whose positions on East Timor are unequivocally in support of self-determination, I believe ACFOA's campaign strategy is suitable for every other industrialized country.

I urge you to study the Australian experience and consider how such a campaign could be implemented in your country.

In Europe, a number of resolutions have already been adopted by the European Parliament and the Assembly of the Council of Europe. However, as you are well aware, resolutions by these bodies are not binding on the national governments. It would be necessary then, I believe, for national campaigns aiming at having national parliaments adopting binding resolutions.

The resolution of the Assembly of the Council of Europe calling for negotiations and an arms embargo against Indonesia could be, it seems to me, the basis for a campaign in some of the key member countries. This and other ideas could be discussed in your next meeting.

East Timor News Agency - ETNA

One of our major weakness has been in the area of information. Neither FRETILIN nor any East Timorese group has been able to set up an effective professional media unit capable of handling, treating and disseminating expeditiously the information received from East Timor.

In 1985 I wrote to you regarding the **East Timor News Agency - ETNA.** I asked then for your commets and support. I received none.

This year, I went ahead and launched ETNA. ETNA has a working relationship with LUSA, the only Portuguese news agency, by which it is the exclusive agent for LUSA in Australia. Most of the information on East Timor, Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand that you might come across and marked LUSA as the source is in fact provided by ETNA. For more information on ETNA, please see Annex.

These and other matters are on my agenda for discussion with you if we can meet this year. January is the only month that I cannot leave the University. Hence if you are going to meet in January I will not be able to attend and will have to wait for the next opportunity.

In solidarity and with friendship,

Jose Ramos-Horta
Special Representative
CNRM

Um abraço,

José Ramos-Horta
30.10.91

CNRM - FALINTIL

Exmo Sr. Presidente
da Comissão Eventual da Assembleia da República
para Acompanhamento da Situação em Timor Leste

Apresento a V. Exa. os meus melhores cumprimentos.

Tenho a honra de informar que :

O Dr. José Ramos Horta, natural de Timor Leste, está devidamente credenciado e autorizado para representar o Conselho Nacional da Resistência Maubere - CNRM - em todas as questões no âmbito diplomático junto de Governos, Parlamentos, Organização das Nações Unidas e todas as instituições inter-governamentais e Organizações não-governamentais.

O CNRM é o órgão superior de luta de que fazem parte a Comissão Directiva da FRETILIN e o Comando das Forças Armadas de Libertação Nacional de Timor Leste - FALINTIL - com Quartel-General em Timor Leste.

As FALINTIL são uma força nacional apartidária que reúne todas as forças nacionalistas timorenses.

Devo informar que as atribuições, agora conferidas ao Dr. José Ramos Horta, obedecem a uma série de considerações concernentes ao desenvolvimento da luta da Libertação Maubere.

Esta representação do CNRM no Exterior tem em vista dinamizar as decisões e o pensamento do CNRM, procedendo as necessárias consultas com a Convergência Nacionalista.

Como porta-vOz do CNRM, no Exterior, o Dr. José Ramos Horta não substitui a DFSE (mantida mandatária do CNRM por leitura da história de uma luta, história que se pretende não negar); contudo, como representante do CNRM no Exterior, o Dr. José Ramos Horta assume obrigações que pertenceriam ao próprio CNRM, enquanto Órgão Máximo da Luta e supra-partidário.

Aproveito a oportunidade para reiterar a Vossa Excelência os meus melhores cumprimentos.

Quartel-General do Conselho da Resistência Maubere, em Timor Leste, aos 10 dias do mês de Julho do ano 1991.

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão
Membro do CNRM
Comandante das FALINTIL